



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe
Statement on Hong Kong's Intent to Destroy Illegal Ivory

January 23, 2014

The Endangered Species Advisory Committee of Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries, and Conservation Department today unanimously agreed to destroy approximately 28 metric tons of confiscated ivory from its government stockpile. A small amount will be retained for scientific, enforcement, identification and education purposes.

“On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I commend Hong Kong for joining a growing number of governments that are taking a strong stand against illegal ivory trade and demonstrating their commitment to end the elephant poaching crisis. Today's unanimous agreement by Hong Kong's Endangered Species Advisory Committee to destroy approximately 28 metric tons of confiscated ivory sends a clear signal that support for efforts to curb illegal wildlife trade is widespread and unwavering. Hong Kong's commitment to destroy its ivory, coupled with the recent ivory destruction events in the United States and China as well as earlier destructions in Kenya, Gabon and the Philippines, send a powerful message to poachers, traffickers and consumers that wildlife crime will not be tolerated at any point along the crime chain. France will also destroy its illegal elephant ivory this year, and we hope that other nations will follow suit.

Elephants once numbered in the millions throughout Africa. Today, there are estimated to be fewer than 400,000 across the continent. Time is growing short for the world to act. Unless the poaching of elephants, rhinos and other species is halted, we will likely see them disappear from the wild in the next several decades. The decision made by Hong Kong today is a critical step that reinforces the growing commitment of the international community to ensure the future survival of the African elephant. We look forward to working with our colleagues in Hong Kong and across the world to continue this recent progress.”

To learn more about the U.S. ivory crush, visit <http://www.fws.gov/le/elephant-ivory-crush.html>